

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 OES-07 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00
COME-00 EPG-02 DODE-00 EB-07 FEAE-00 FPC-01 H-01
INR-07 INT-05 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-04
USIA-06 SP-02 SS-15 STR-04 TRSE-00 ACDA-07 PRS-01
PA-01 /108 W

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FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 512

INFO AMCONSUL BRISBANE

AMEMBASSY OTTOWA

USMISSION IAEA VIENNA

USERDA HQ GERMANTOWN

USERDA HQ WASHDC

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ENRG, SENU, EMIN, TECH,AS

SUBJ: RANGER URANIUM ENVIRONMENTAL INQUIRY SECOND REPORT RELEASED

REF: STATE 115897

1. "RANGER URANIUM ENVIRONMENTAL INQUIRY - SECOND REPORT".
RELEASED TO PUBLIC AT 5:00 PM.M. WEDNESDAY, MAY 25, AFTER
CLOSE OF LOCK STOCK EXCHANGES. IN A REPORT THAT PRINCIPAL
AUTHOR, MR. JUSTICE FOX, RECENTLY APTLY TOLD DCM WOULD
ENTIRELY PLEASE NO ONE, FOX COMMISSION GAVE WHAT MIGHT BEST
BE TERMED " AN AMBER LIGHT." TO URANIUM MINING IN AUSTRALIA.

2. BASIC ELEMENTS OF SECOND FOX REPORT WERE AS FOLLOWS:
A) REPORT RECOMMENDS MAJOR CHANGES IN RANGER PROPOSAL
COVERING ENVIRONMENTAL SAFEGUARDS AND LAND USE ALTERATIONS
BEFORE PROJECT ALLOWED GO AHEAD; B) STATES THAT IF ITS
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RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGE FOLLOWED, IT SEES NO
ENVIRONMENTAL REASON WHY RANGER PROJECT COULD NOT GO
AHEAD; C) IF RANGER MINE IS ALLOWED TO PROCEED, NO
OTHER MINE, WITH POSSIBLE EXCEPTION OF PANCONTINENTAL'S
JABLUKA MINE, SHOULD BE ALLOWED, AT LEAST FOR TIME
BEING; D) REPORT SINGLES OUT KORANDA AUSTRALIA LTD.'S
KOONGARRA MINE AS ONE WHICH SHOULD NOT BE DEVELOPED,

AGAIN FOR THE TIME BEING; E) ON SAFEGUARDS FOR RANGER MINE, COMMISSION RECOMMENDS THAT NO PART OF ITS PROPOSALS SHOULD BE VARIED UNLESS IT IS CLEAR THAT JUST AS SATISFACTORY ALTERNATIVES AVAILABLE; F) REPORT RECOMMENDS ESTABLISHMENT OF MONITORING PROGRAM AND COORDINATING COMMITTEE; G) REPORT RECOMMENDS ESTABLISHMENT OF URANIUM MARKETING AUTHORITY TO OVERSEE EXPORT SALES OF URANIUM AND ADMINISTER EXPORT POLICY, INCLUDING SAFEGUARDS; H) REPORT ALSO STRESSES DESIRABILITY OF SEQUENTIAL DEVELOPMENT OF URANIUM RESOURCES; I) REPORT MAKES NO MENTION OF QUEENSLAND MINES NABARLEK DEPOSIT, WHICH WITHIN ARNHAM LAND ABORIGINAL RESERVE; J) REPORT REJECTS CONCEPT OF CENTRALIZED YELLOWCAKE PROCESSING FACILITY.

3. REPORT DEALS EXTENSIVELY WITH PROBLEMS OF ABORIGINES AND PARTLY IN THIS CONTEXT CALLS FOR EXPANSION OF PROPOSED KAKADU NATIONAL PARK WITH RANGER AND JABILUKA EXCLUDED FROM BUT SURROUNDED BY PARK. REPORT ALSO URGES THAT NUMBER OF WHITES ALLOWED WORK IN AREA AND LIVE IN PROPOSED TOWN BE STRICTLY CONTROLLED AND NUMBER OF TOURISTS ALLOWED INTO AREA BE LIMITED IN ORDER NOT OVERLY DISTURB ABORIGINAL CULTURE.

4. COMMENT: FOLLOWING COMMENTS RECEIVED FROM REGIONAL RESOURCES ATTACHE WHO CURRENTLY TRAVELLING IN TASMANIA:

A) SEQUENTIAL DEVELOPMENT IS NOTHING NEW. IT APPEARS THAT THE TWO DEVELOPMENTS, RANGER AND PANCONTINENTAL, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BOTH ARE OUTSIDE OF THE PROPOSED PARK SO THAT IS WHY THEY WOULD BE GIVEN FIRST CONSIDERATION.

B) THERE IS SOME DISAPPOINTMENT THAT FOX WASN'T VERY DEFINITIVE ON THE ISSUES TO MINE OR EXPORT URANIUM. REPORT SEEMS CONSISTENT ON ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUE, BUT THIS IS TO BE EXPECTED SINCE THIS IS THE CHARTER GIVEN THE GROUP.

C) IT IS SURPRISING THAT RANGER WILL BE ASKED TO DO THEIR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT AGAIN AS THEY HAVE ALREADY GIVEN A LOT OF TIME TO IT AND DONE A GOOD JOB.

D) THE FOX REPORT DOES NOT APPEAR TO OFFER ANY INSURMOUNTABLE OBSTACLES TO THE MINING AND EXPORT OF URANIUM SUBJECT TO ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATION AND NUCLEAR SAFEGUARDS. GOA ACTIONS SEEM TO INDICATE THE GREEN LIGHT IS IMMINENT. GOA HAS TAKEN AN AFFIRMATIVE

ACTION RELATIVE TO SAFEGUARDS. ENVIRONMENTALISTS
SEEN TO BE IN AGREEMENT WITH THE NUCLEAR AS WELL AS
CULTURAL SAFEGUARDS.

5. EMBASSY PLANNING SUBMIT DETAILED ANALYSIS OF FOX
REPORT BY AIRGRAM UPON RETURN OF RESOURCES ATTACHE.

6. EMBASSY WILL DISPATCH PROMPTLY COPIES OF REPORT
AS INDICATED IN STATE 115897, BUT AT U.S. \$12.05 PER
COPY (TOTAL US\$96.40) PURCHASE IMPOSES STRAIN ON
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Message Attributes

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